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Monday, 15 December 2003, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Tafrov	(Bulgaria)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	Cameroon	Mr. Tidjani
	Chile	Mr. Muñoz
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	France	Mrs. D'Achon
	Germany	Mr. Pleuger
	Guinea	Mr. Sow
	Mexico	Mrs. Arce de Jeannet
	Pakistan	Mr. Khalid
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	Spain	Mr. Arias
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Davis
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

Letter dated 31 March 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/287)

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03-65590 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 31 March 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/287)

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Australia, Japan, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Danilo Türk, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Danilo Türk, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Türk: At the last briefing, on 6 August 2001, the Council was informed of the completion of stage II of weapons disposal in Bougainville. As a result, the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) and the Bougainville Resistance Force (BRF) put more than 1,000 pieces of weapons into 10 containers and 65 tanks, each secured by two locks, with one key held by the relevant commander and the other by the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB), pending a final decision on the final fate of those weapons. The achievement of this important benchmark allowed the national Government to court the constitutional amendment and the organic law on Peace-building in Bougainville. This also provided considerable impetus for the parties on the issues of a Bougainville constitution, the delegation of power, powers and functions to the Bougainville Interim Provincial Government, and other arrangements needed to be put in place prior to elections for a Bougainville autonomous government. The completion of stage II marked the perfect cluster for making a decision on the final fate of the contained weapons that is stage III of weapons disposal.

Today, we are happy to report progress in most of the aforementioned areas, and I wish to update the Security Council on recent developments.

I would like to start with the constitutional process. In the wake of quite harsh critiques of the draft issued by the Papua New Guinea Attorney-General, the Attorney-General finally presented in October his long-awaited comments to the national Government on the second draft of the Bougainville constitution. Officials of the two sides are currently engaged in resolving their differences relating to consistency between the second draft of the Bougainville constitution and the Papua New Guinea constitution. On 7 December, the National Executive Council — the cabinet of the Papua New Guinea Government — reaffirmed its firm commitment to honour the letter and the spirit of the Bougainville Peace Agreement and to implement the corresponding laws. It is expected that in the very near future the Papua New Guinea Government will provide to the Bougainvillean leaders its comments on the second draft of the constitution.

After overcoming the remaining constitutional differences, the way will be cleared for the Bougainvilleans to pursue the task of developing the third and final draft of the constitution. It is expected that the Bougainville constitution could be officially adopted around February or March 2004 and endorsed by the national Government by July or August 2004. Immediately after that, the constitution would come into force. Following the Government's endorsement of

the constitution, it is estimated that six months would be needed to complete preparations for elections.

I would like now to move to the question of weapons disposal and report on the joint position on stage III of weapons disposal by the Bougainville Revolutionary Army and the Bougainville Resistance Force.

At their inter-factional meeting held on 30 November 2003 at Nissan Island in Bougainville, the Bougainville Revolutionary Army and the Bougainville Resistance Force adopted a resolution which declared that the final fate of the contained weapons should be their destruction. According to that resolution, the destruction should take place "as soon as the essential components of the peace process have been finalized". The components or conditions include the coming into force of the Bougainville constitution, the resolution of outstanding issues with the Me'ekamui Defence Force (MDF) and reconciliation between MDF, and BRA and BRF, the two Bougainvillean armed factions. The achievement by BRA and BRF of a unified position on weapons destruction bodes well for the next meeting of the Peace Process Consultative Committee, on 16 and 17 December 2003. At that meeting, the Papua New Guinea Government and the Bougainville leaders are expected to meet or modify some of the conditions enunciated by the Bougainville factions, thereby facilitating the adoption of the stage III decision on the final fate of the weapons.

In accordance with the Peace Agreement, a decision on the final fate of the contained weapons — as I said, about 1,900 pieces of weapons — should be made before 21 December 2003. Since the national Government favours destruction, it is not expected that there would be disagreement on points of substance. Where implementation of the eventual decision is concerned, UNPOB has prepared, for the benefit of the parties, a statement of the administrative and technical issues that need to be addressed before that process of destruction can begin. Those factors are expected to have an impact on the timing and implementation of the decision.

Nevertheless, despite the need for consultations on this matter among all the parties, the way is now cleared for those individuals, or entire districts, that wish to do so, to begin destroying weapons at their discretion. However, the destruction of the bulk of the contained weapons seems unlikely to take place until next year. In that connection, the United Nations Political Office is grateful for the offers of technical support pledged by regional partners for facilitating the destruction process. The BRA/BRF weapons-related decision is an important first step in the process of creating a weapons-free Bougainville, and in fostering the kind of climate which the Peace Agreement contemplates for the holding of elections.

I would like now to brief the Council on the issue of delegation of police powers. The process of creating the climate which is necessary for the holding of elections is reinforced by police-related developments which will enable Bougainvilleans to take legal control over law and justice. The National Executive Council decided to delegate police powers and functions to the Bougainville Interim Provincial Government. The formal handover ceremony is expected to take place in Buka in the coming days: on 16 or 17 December 2003. Meanwhile, arrangements are being finalized for further strengthening the law and justice capacity of Bougainville through the deployment of 30 Bougainvillean police from the mainland and the recruitment among Bougainvilleans of the first 50 of 100 cadets for police training.

I would like to say a few words about the so-called "no go zone". While some progress has been achieved in the area controlled by Francis Ona, he continues to refuse to contain the weapons of the Me'ekamui Defence Force. His position on this issue could have an impact on the pace and timing of the implementation of the BRA/BRF decision to destroy their weapons. The supporters of Francis Ona still maintain roadblocks that prevent the delivery of Government services and development assistance to the so-called no-go zone. We believe that the Bougainvilleans will be able to reconcile their differences on this matter. It is a process that will take some time. Meanwhile, the United Nations should stand ready to provide its good offices with respect to the initiatives in this area.

Now I would like to briefly refer to the outstanding issues of the peace process. The expected decision on the final fate of the contained weapons within the stage III framework should justify the termination of UNPOB's current mandate, which expires on 31 December 2003. Its termination would also comply with the Council's decision last year on the matter.

The United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB) is mindful of the date set by the Council for its closure and withdrawal. However, by 31 December 2003, the peace process will not have reached its logical and complete conclusion, that is, the establishment of an autonomous government. That is why we share the view of the Papua New Guinea Government, as expressed in the letter of the Foreign Minister Rabbie Namaliu, dated 11 December 2003, addressed to the Secretary-General, and of the Bougainville parties in general, that a United Nations political presence in Bougainville is still required. At the same time, we are mindful of the need expressed by the Council to not keep the United Nations mandate in Bougainville open-ended and of the need to tie this mandate to specific benchmarks.

We fully appreciate the support of the Council for the Secretary-General's recommendations in the past to extend the Bougainville mandate without major staffing or budget modification. This time, we believe that the maturity of the peace process and the limited scope of the tasks that remain to be completed warrant a significant down-sizing of the United Nations office in Bougainville. We strongly believe that this could send a very potent message of encouragement to the parties and support for the Bougainvilleans to increasingly take over the handling of their own affairs.

Given the withdrawal by the end of the year of the Bougainville Transitional Team comprising personnel from Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Vanuatu, a continued political presence by the United Nations would also contribute to building confidence among the parties in the peace process and consolidating the considerable investment that the Organization and the international community have made to the process. It would give the autonomous government that will be established a fair chance of starting out in an environment that provides a reasonable prospect for the continued strengthening of peace, security and stability on the island.

On this basis, we are proposing a new mission. In light of the above, the Secretariat is of the view that a successor to UNPOB, a United Nations observer mission in Bougainville (UNOMB), should be set up in order to carry out the following functions: first, chairing of the Peace Process Consultative Committee; secondly, reporting on security and the subsequent destruction of the contained weapons; thirdly, monitoring the constitutional process leading to the adoption of the Bougainville constitution; fourthly, verifying and certifying substantial compliance by the parties with the weapons disposal plan, thereby making it conducive to holding elections; and fifthly, performing other good offices as appropriate or when requested to do so by the parties.

Since the observer mission is expected to play a more limited role in the ongoing peace process, we suggest that UNPOB's substantive staff be reduced by 50 per cent. Currently, UNPOB comprises a head of mission, two political advisors, one military advisor and two support staff. The proposed downsized successor to UNPOB would comprise a head of mission, one political advisor and two support staff. The new staffing structure and modified mandate are expected to result in substantial savings.

In addition, the mission would continue to work in close cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other United Nations bodies on practical aspects of peace-building in Bougainville. However, it should preserve its independent status, since the mission's mandate would have a clearly defined political character. Meanwhile, the Department of Political Affairs has already started consultations with the UNDP office in Port Moresby regarding the sharing of office space in both Buka and Arawa. If successful, it could further reduce the operational cost of the new office. In parallel, UNDP is working on the second phase of its rehabilitation programme for Bougainville, which would include assistance in agriculture, capacity-building and other areas.

In conclusion, I would like to express our hope that the Council will support the recommendations of the Secretary-General regarding the establishment of UNOMB for a period of six months, starting on 1 January 2004. Should the Secretary-General's recommendations be endorsed, the Secretariat will continue to report to the Council on this matter in the first half of next year.

The President: I now give the floor to Council members.

Mr. Lucas (Angola): Mr. President, we thank you for convening this meeting on the situation in Bougainville. We extend our thanks to Assistant Secretary-General Danilo Türk for his briefing on the recent developments on the island. We share his analysis and conclusions.

We cannot but express satisfaction for the progress achieved in the peace process, the completion of stage II of the weapons disposal, the issuing of legislation enacted by the government and increasing cooperation between the authorities of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville leaders. Such a spirit of commitment and trust between the parties has been translated into consultations that the parties have maintained since February, after the signing of the memorandum of understanding establishing a mechanism for consultations on all aspects of the granting of Bougainville's autonomy.

We deem very encouraging the recent developments, namely, the agreements reached by the Interim Joint Supervisory Body on outstanding issues of the Bougainville peace agreement. We are aware of the importance of drafting the constitution for an autonomous Bougainville government in the framework of Papua New Guinea and other priorities set by the government in order to consolidate the gains obtained so far in Bougainville.

The completion of the weapons disposal process, the provision of security and maintenance of public order under the rule of law, the delegation of powers and functions to the authorities of Bougainville and the building of political and civil authority as foundations of peace are, in our view, some of the most critical elements for the implementation of the Bougainville peace agreement. The commitment of the parties to fully implement the provisions of the agreement and their awareness that it lays the achievement of peace in the hands of the men and women of Bougainville and of Papua New Guinea are sources of hope that a sustained peaceful solution to the Bougainville issue is possible.

My delegation appreciates very positively the work of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB) in providing ongoing support to the peace process. Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Vanuatu, by their participation in the Bougainville Transition Team, have also played an outstanding role in the stabilization of the situation. We welcome, therefore, the efforts by relevant United Nations agencies and the international community of donors towards restoring and consolidating peace in Bougainville.

To conclude, we would like to stress the view of the country's leadership on the important role UNPOB is expected to play in the transitional period leading up to the holding of elections in Bougainville for the autonomous government of the island. My delegation supports the recommendation of the Secretary-General for the establishment of a new United Nations observer mission in Bougainville with a view to ensuring United Nations assistance and mediation until the conclusion of the peace process with the establishment of an autonomous government in Bougainville.

Mr. Negroponte (United States of America): I would first like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Türk for this timely briefing on the status of the political process and the work of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB). We also appreciate the opportunity to hear the views of neighbouring States which have been uniquely involved in the stabilization of Bougainville. We support the recommendation that there should be a follow-on interim observer mission that will facilitate completion of the constitutional process and complete the destruction of weapons.

The United Nations political mission in Bougainville has been successful. An interim observer mission will provide the necessary transition that will foster increased security and further economic development. We appreciate the effort of regional players in assisting in the process of stabilization and thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Noel Sinclair for his efforts to facilitate the constitutional process. We look forward to the results of this week's Peace Process Consultative Committee meeting and we hope that all parties can work to find resolution of their different positions.

Mr. Pleuger (Germany): First of all, I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Danilo Türk for his detailed and very comprehensive report. I would also like to highly commend the personnel of the United Nations Political Office (UNPOB) in Bougainville and its head, Mr. Noel Sinclair, for the outstanding work they have accomplished.

I would also like to congratulate the people of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville for the achievements reached thus far. The parties must be aware now that they are fully responsible for the process and thus have to increase their efforts in implementing the provisions of the peace Agreement.

The peace process, in our view, is now at a critical turning point. The mandate of the United

Nations Political Office in Bougainville and of its head, Ambassador Sinclair, will expire at the end of this year. The departure of UNPOB, in our opinion, is a logical next step on the way to a self-reliant Bougainville. It is time to further increase the ownership of the peace process by the people of Bougainville and Papua New Guinea and to move the focus from peace-building to post-conflict capacity-building, ensuring the rule of law and social and economic development.

Therefore, it is crucial that the remaining tasks of peace-building, in particular the constitutional process leading to the election of an autonomous Government of Bougainville and the destruction of all collected weapons, be completed without further delay. In that context, we warmly welcome the agreement in principle by former combatants to destroy their weapons. We deeply wish that the tenor of the agreement will be confirmed by the Peace Process Consultative Committee meeting this week. In our view, the weapons have to be destroyed immediately, without any further conditions.

As the Government of Papua New Guinea pointed out in its recent letter to the Secretary-General, the progress made in the last half of this year has been slower than expected. Therefore, tasks originally designated to be fulfilled by UNPOB still remain to be done. However, in our view this does not require the extension of the mandate in its current form for another year. We would rather welcome the presence of United Nations personnel on a smaller scale and for a shorter period of time. We therefore endorse and fully support the compromise recommended by Assistant Secretary-General Türk.

The peace process, we feel, is now largely self-sustaining. An interim observer mission comprising fewer United Nations personnel would be able to meet the remaining demands. The parties to the peace process have to understand that they have to move on expeditiously and finalize the peace-building process within the coming six months. Elections should follow on as soon as possible.

In conclusion, I would like to commend the United Nations specialized agencies and international donor support and to stress the important role they play in returning the region to normalcy and achieving sustainable peace there. In that context, I would like to reiterate that Germany will continue to contribute to the further development of a functioning civil society in Bougainville within the framework of the European Union.

Mrs. D'Achon (France) (*spoke in French*): I, too, would like to thank Mr. Danilo Türk for his very comprehensive briefing. France welcomes the work done by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Bougainville, Ambassador Noel Sinclair. We also thank the countries that have contributed to the Bougainville Transitional Team.

Despite progress made in recent months, my country remains concerned by the delays in the disposal of weapons, the ratification of phase three of the peace plan and the establishment of an election date. As the Security Council noted in August, the mandate of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville is to end at the end of this year. However, France is prepared to support one last — I insist on the word "last" — extension of the mandate of the Political Office in 2004, as requested by Papua New Guinea. We believe, however, that the Office cannot be extended for yet another year, because that would be a disservice to the people concerned and appear to endorse those who have caused the pointless and dangerous delay in finding a political solution.

The presence of the United Nations should therefore be limited to the first six months of 2004, as proposed by the Secretariat. It should also be confined to a limited number of observers, and a maximum of two persons would seem to be a reasonable figure. Moreover, the format and duration would seem to be sufficient in order to complete the settlement process. As has been recalled, the process includes the disposal of collected weapons, the holding of a constituent assembly, the adoption of a constitution, the preparation of elections and the create of an autonomous Government. In all of these areas, however, the future lies with the people of Bougainville themselves. It is up to them to take the necessary steps as soon as possible to normalize the political situation.

Finally, the final extension of the mandate of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville must have a clear exit strategy, as the Ambassador of Germany pointed out. Once the mandate has been completed, I believe that the United Nations Development Programme will be able to make the best possible contribution to consolidating normalization,

and in particular to improving the functioning of the political administration of the island.

Mrs. Arce de Jeannet (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish first of all to thank Mr. Danilo Türk, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for the information he has given us.

Mexico believes that the successful completion of disarmament and the adoption of a constitution are essential to consolidating peace and laying the foundations for the development and economic growth of Bougainville, particularly at a time when the international presence is being reduced and the people of the island are preparing to take charge of their own future. In that effort, the donor community has a fundamental role to play in supporting the establishment of sustainable economic and social conditions by channelling resources to infrastructure, education, health care and development projects, thus strengthening the peaceful transition towards a stable political future for the island.

I take this opportunity once again to express our gratitude for the work and support provided to Bougainville by Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Vanuatu, first through the Peace Monitoring Group and later through the Bougainville Transitional Team, which has almost completed its work.

We note with satisfaction the measures being taken by the Government of Papua New Guinea, such as the delegation of powers to the Bougainville Interim Provincial Executive Council, including control of the police command in Bougainville, as well as the cooperation seen among some of the former combatants in the area of security, particularly in Buka and Arawa. Although security conditions have remained stable, there is a need to strengthen the disarmament, reintegration and rehabilitation programmes for former combatants, as well as the structural aspects of Bougainville's economic and social development, in order to avoid a resurgence of the conflict. We appeal to the Government of Papua New Guinea and the Bougainville authorities to report on advances in the implementation of those programmes, particularly concerning the final decision reached on the ultimate fate of the weapons collected during phase two of the weapons disposal programme.

We have also taken note of the progress made in drawing up a draft constitution for Bougainville, the third revision of which is now being prepared. As I have already noted, Mexico believes that the successful conclusion of disarmament and the adoption of the constitution are fundamental elements in the strengthening of peace and in the laying of foundations for Bougainville's development and economic growth. In that connection, the support of the United Nations is necessary, especially with regard to the holding of elections and the establishment of an autonomous government and the strengthening of its institutions.

My Government has received the note regarding the request made by the Government of Papua New Guinea to the Secretary-General concerning the extension of UNPOB's mandate until elections are held on the establishment of a Bougainville autonomous government. We have also taken note of the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a United Nations observer mission in Bougainville with a six-month mandate beginning on 1 January 2004. Mexico will study the Secretary-General's proposal, bearing in mind any decision's financial implications for Member States and the best way that the United Nations can continue to support the strengthening of the political process in Bougainville. The delegation of Mexico will take a constructive approach in considering the draft resolution to be introduced in that regard.

Lastly, I would once again like to express Mexico's gratitude for the work of Ambassador Noel Sinclair and the staff of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville. Their devotion has led to progress towards achieving a lasting solution to the conflict in Bougainville.

Mr. Atieh (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): We would like to thank Mr. Danilo Türk, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for his comprehensive briefing on the latest developments in Bougainville.

The Bougainville Peace Agreement aims at strengthening the foundations of a society enjoying genuine peace and the restoration of civil authority in the form of a democratically elected civilian Government. In that connection, we wish to make the following points regarding the peace process.

First, the programme to collect and dispose of arms must continue, especially given the progress made and the success attained during stage II. Secondly, former combatants must be reintegrated into civil society, and plans must be made to ensure security in that regard and security in general. Thirdly, there is a

need to resolve all pending issues and to integrate all factions and forces remaining outside the peace process. Fourthly, the new constitution is of central importance for the implementation of the Peace Agreement. We believe the second revised draft text is extremely important. Fifthly, there is a need for regional support for the peace process, in particular for the efforts made by the transition team in Bougainville in that regard.

Allow me to express our appreciation for the efforts of the Bougainville Interim Provincial Government to bring about peace and stability there. We also appreciate its support for all measures leading to the establishment of an autonomous government.

In conclusion, my delegation supports the Secretary-General's recommendation to establish a United Nations interim observer mission in Bougainville for a period of six months beginning in 2004. That would help to support the peace process entered into by the Bougainville Interim Provincial Government.

Mr. Sow (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): I would like to join previous speakers in thanking you, Mr. President, for organizing this public meeting, which, although it goes without saying, is a clear demonstration of the Security Council's interest in the issue of Bougainville. Allow me also to thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Danilo Türk, for the very useful briefing he has just given us regarding recent developments in the implementation of the Bougainville Peace Agreement.

My delegation welcomes the progress made in the implementation of the weapons disposal programme despite delays in the initial timetable, particularly with regard to the destruction of collected weapons. My delegation also welcomes the transfer of police functions from the central authorities to the Bougainville Interim Provincial Government. That represents a first step towards autonomy for the province. We are particularly pleased to note that that progress has been made possible thanks both to the good will demonstrated by the parties and to the important role played by the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville.

However, we believe that it would be wise to emphasize the crucial importance of completing the weapons disposal plan through the implementation of stage III, which entails the destruction of those weapons. I need not recall that that is the sine qua non condition for the holding of a referendum leading to the ultimate autonomy of the island. In that regard, we urge all parties to redouble their efforts to implement the Bougainville Peace Agreement. In particular, we have in mind former combatants, whose reintegration must be a priority in reaching a final and lasting settlement of the dispute.

In the same vein, we remain convinced that the economic recovery of the island can play a crucial role in building peace. We therefore reiterate our appeal to the donor community to mobilize an increased effort towards Bougainville's economic and social development.

In conclusion, my delegation supports the idea of extending the mandate of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville, as requested by Papua New Guinea. We hope that the commendable efforts made by the parties will be translated into the speedy finalization of the peace process under way. In that regard, we agree with Mr. Danilo Türk's proposal. We congratulate him and encourage him in his work.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the introduction of the report of the Secretary-General. We also welcome the work done by the Head of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville, Ambassador Noel Sinclair, and his team. I would also like to convey my appreciation to Mr. Danilo Türk.

The conclusion of stage II of the disarmament process has made it possible to make progress towards autonomy for Bougainville. We hope that the Peace Process Consultative Committee, which is meeting this week, will determine the modalities for the destruction of the weapons that have been surrendered, in accordance with the recent agreement among the parties, with which we are pleased.

The constitutional amendments and the Organic Law on Peace-building in Bougainville represent a milestone and lay the groundwork for the holding of elections for an autonomous government, in accordance with the autonomy arrangements. We hope that the Bougainville Constitutional Commission will soon complete its work, in order that the Constituent Assembly may soon be convened. The active cooperation of the countries of the region deserves our full appreciation and is a model to be emulated. We also recognize the ongoing commitment the national

Government has been demonstrating vis-à-vis the Peace Agreement, as well as the determination of the people of Bougainville to establish their institutions and take charge of their destiny.

Spain believes it is appropriate to extend the mission of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville until next year, so that it will continue to provide assistance to conclude the matters pending under the Peace Agreement. As progress is made in the political process, emphasis needs to be placed on the rehabilitation and the reintegration of ex-combatants and on rebuilding the infrastructure and community services. The United Nations Development Programme will play a key role in that regard.

Finally, we trust that peace and stability will be consolidated in Bougainville in such a way that the peace process will be successfully concluded.

Mr. Khalid (Pakistan): I would like, first of all, to thank Mr. Danilo Türk for his comprehensive briefing. Pakistan appreciates the facilitating role the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB) has played over the past few years. We also commend the efforts of all the parties that have sought to implement a peaceful solution to the conflict in that territory. We appreciate in particular the Government of Papua New Guinea's courageous decisions and a strong commitment to peace. This has been crucial to the success of the peace process.

We are happy to note that UNPOB has largely been able to complete the tasks assigned to it. This has facilitated the constitutional process, clearing the way for elections for an autonomous Government in Bougainville in 2004. This will in turn lead to the eventual holding of a referendum in which the people of Bougainville will exercise their right to self-determination in accordance with the provisions of the Lincoln and Arawa Agreements. Pakistan strongly supports this path, which the parties have courageously agreed to follow. Peace is the only solution, and this process, painstaking though it is, still remains its best guarantor.

However, to sustain peace, it is crucial to promote and sustain socio-economic development. The two are indivisible. Therefore, we urge the donor community to contribute generously, not only to the financing of the peace process, but also to promoting long-term socio-economic development in an area that so badly needs it.

Pakistan has always argued against the premature withdrawal of the United Nations involvement in any peace process. We understand that UNPOB's mandate, which has played a crucial role in building peace as well as trust in Bougainville, will expire at the end of this month. However, there is much follow-up work that remains to sustain the peace process. This includes, among other things, tasks related to the destruction of weapons, the facilitation of contacts between the parties and the preparations for elections next year. We therefore hope that the United Nations political engagement in Bougainville will not end with the expiry of UNPOB's mandate. We support the possible creation of interim measures, which will allow the United Nations to continue its work there and to stay the course in facilitating the full implementation of the peace process.

Mr. Tidjani (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank Assistant Secretary-General of Political Affairs, Mr. Danilo Türk, for his briefing, which has given us detailed and useful information for our understanding of the activities of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB) since 6 August 2003. My delegation welcomes the progress made in the peace process, particularly in drafting a Constitution that will establish the rule of law and justice, the disposal of weapons that have been stockpiled or held by individuals, and the destruction of weapons.

This is a process that, my delegation believes, must take place as soon as possible and in an unconditional manner. This will certainly strengthen trust among the parties and will make it possible to speed up the settlement process and therefore restore stability and provide conditions for sustainable development that will benefit all.

At this stage, the success of this process clearly depends basically on the will and the commitment of the parties. More than ever, these parties need the international community's support, particularly of the United Nations. That is why my delegation supports the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend the mandate of the United Nations Political Office by six months — a political presence that will help the parties complete the current process in the best possible conditions.

As many delegations have said before me, I wish to state that the mandate of the Office should be

somewhat reviewed in the light of the information that Mr. Danilo Türk has just given us. I should furthermore like to encourage donors to continue providing manifold assistance to help consolidate peace in Bougainville. We wish to congratulate the countries of the region for their contribution in this area.

In conclusion, I wish to thank the head of the United Nations Political Office, Mr. Noel Sinclair, and all of the United Nations staff in Bougainville for the high quality of their work.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First, I wish to thank the Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Türk, for his detailed briefing on the latest developments in the peace process in Bougainville. Since the signing of the Bougainville peace agreement, the peace process in Bougainville is going smoothly. Recently, the various parties to the peace agreement have reached a preliminary agreement on the final fate of collected weapons. Consultations on the draft constitution are well under way. The new Bougainville government has also delegated its control of policing powers in Bougainville to the Bougainville local authorities.

All these positive developments are quite encouraging. China wishes to express its appreciation for the good political will demonstrated by the new Government of Papua New Guinea as well as the parties to the Bougainville peace process. We hope that the parties concerned will continue their efforts to achieve comprehensive implementation of the Peace Agreement and to achieve lasting peace under stability in Bougainville at an early date.

The United Nations has always followed closely and supported the peace process in Bougainville and has played a unique role. Ambassador Sinclair, as well as the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB), have done an excellent job and have won the trust and the respect of the parties to the Bougainville peace process. We wish to pay our tribute to those efforts. At present, the disposal of weapons and the drafting of the constitution have entered a critical stage and the various conditions for producing an autonomous government through elections are basically in place.

We understand the wish of the Government of Papua New Guinea that UNPOB continue to take part in the peace process in Bougainville. We believe that, under the current circumstances, there is still a need for an appropriate United Nations presence in Bougainville, because it is of great importance for ensuring the success of the Bougainville peace process. Peace and development in Bougainville go hand in hand.

While promoting the political process in Bougainville, we also call upon the various United Nations agencies and donor countries to give much attention and support to post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction in Bougainville, to help the local authorities of Bougainville strengthen their capacities for construction and to help ex-combatants start a new life as soon as possible.

Mr. Andereya Laborre (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me, first of all, to congratulate you, Sir, on the way in which you are leading the Council's work this month. We particularly welcome the convening of this public meeting on the situation in Bougainville, given that it is very important to know the views of the countries of the region, which have demonstrated their commitment and cooperation in the peace process. I also thank Assistant Secretary-General Danilo Türk for his briefing on the developments in the peace process in the most recent period.

We welcome the common position reached among the parties for the destruction of arms and munitions under stage III of the weapons disposal programme. However, we understand that this depends on a number of conditions that are not easily achieved, among them, the entry-into-force of the Constitution, the settlement of outstanding issues such as the Me'ekamui Defence Force, and reconciliation among the various factions. That is why we look forward with great interest and hope to the upcoming meeting to be held between those groups of Bougainville and the Government of Papua New Guinea. We hope that they achieve the necessary agreements in the peace process.

We acknowledge that many challenges still lie ahead for Bougainville. Among them should be noted the important task of developing the proposed Constitution and, most especially, preparations for the elections. In that context, we recognize the central role of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB) in resolving disputes and mediating on differences and changes in the holding of the elections.

As well, it is necessary to support the process of laying the basic foundations for establishing the autonomous government of Bougainville. That process

collected weapons, and we call for the speedy implementation of that decision.

We commend the activities of the authorities of Papua New Guinea to implement the tasks of the peace agreement, including the efforts made, together with the Bougainville Constitutional Commission, to advance the constitutional process in Bougainville. Of great importance is the inclusion in the Constitution of Papua New Guinea of a new, 14th section on peace-building in Bougainville on the basis of the Bougainville peace agreement.

We welcome steps to strengthen the local police including by delegating to it substantial powers and functions.

We call upon all those who have refused to join the peace process in Bougainville to do so now. We commend the work done by the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville headed by Mr. Sinclair, in advancing the peace settlement. We take note of the usefulness of regional efforts, inter alia, those undertaken within the group established by Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Vanuatu for the transition in Bougainville, which has been effectively facilitating the advancement of the peace process.

However, despite the positive steps we observe in the settlement in Bougainville, many tasks in the peace process remain unfulfilled. In order to carry them out, the further support of the international community will be required. In that regard, the Russian delegation favours the extension of the United Nations presence in Bougainville and is prepared to engage in a constructive discussion in the Security Council on concrete modalities for future United Nations efforts to advance the peace process there. We also think it is important to continue and to increase, with the support of the regional organizations, assistance from the United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations agencies to the processes of post-conflict rehabilitation and peace-building in Bougainville.

Ms. Davis (United Kingdom): We would also like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Türk for his briefing this morning. We also join others in expressing our appreciation for the work of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB) and its director Noel Sinclair. We also recognize the valuable role in Bougainville of the neighbouring States.

We agree with Assistant Secretary-General Türk and others that there is still work to be done in advancing the peace process in Bougainville, particularly in the areas of weapons disposal, monitoring and building confidence in the new constitutional arrangements and facilitating moves towards elections. In the forthcoming period, we hope to see a greater sense of urgency from all parties to the Bougainville peace process in moving forward in those areas. We support the establishment of a small, closely-focused, short-term follow-on United Nations mission along the lines outlined this morning by Assistant Secretary-General Türk.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should now like to make a statement in my capacity as Permanent Representative of Bulgaria.

I wish to thank Mr. Türk for his briefing on the implementation of the Bougainville Peace Agreement and on the latest developments. Bulgaria warmly welcomes the resolve of the Papua New Guinea authorities, as well as the invaluable contribution made by the countries of the region, in particular by the States members of the Bougainville transitional team — Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Vanuatu — to the implementation of the ceasefire and to ensuring the political stability of the country.

My delegation would like to express its gratitude for the important role of, and the efforts made by, the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB) and its Director, Ambassador Noel Sinclair, in ensuring progress in the implementation of the peace process.

Bulgaria welcomes the agreements reached at the recent meeting in Adelaide, Australia, between the foreign ministers of Australia and of Papua New Guinea. My country welcomes the efforts of the States involved in the peace process as well as the completion of stage III of the weapons-disposal plan of action. We believe that the decision on the fate of the weapons that have been collected must be acceptable to all parties to the peace process and should adequately respond to security-related problems and challenges.

My delegation believes also that peace-building efforts must continue without any hindrance from any party. There is also a need, in order to ensure a comprehensive reconciliation, to preserve the possibility of involving Francis Ona and his group in the peace process.

My delegation welcomes the concrete steps taken by the Government of Papua New Guinea in implementing the peace process, including the amendments to the country's Constitution and the efforts to consolidate peace in Bougainville. The changes that have been made will not only contribute to improving the economic and social situation of the inhabitants of Bougainville; they also mark a new stage in the relationship between the national Government and Bougainville.

We believe that, given the importance of the stage at which the Bougainville peace process is now, UNPOB's mandate should be extended by six months.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Papua New Guinea, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Aisi (Papua New Guinea): I wish first to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting and for having allowed it to be an open meeting, thereby enabling others to express their views, particularly our friends from the region. I wish also to thank members for their comments this morning and Mr. Danilo Türk for his report.

Papua New Guinea expresses sincere appreciation and gratitude for the opportunity to participate in this most important debate on the future of the peace process in Bougainville and the well-being of Papua New Guinea as a whole.

It allows us to place on record the sincere appreciation of all of the parties for the support the United Nations has given the peace process, through the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea (UNPOB) — which, for the sake of consistency with agreements between the parties, is known on the ground as the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea (UNOMB). It allows us to contribute to the Security Council's review of UNPOB/UNOMB.

Papua New Guinea is, of course, conscious of the basis on which the Security Council agreed to extend UNPOB/UNOMB for a further 12 months at the end of last year. This meeting is therefore additionally welcome and critical to the future of the peace process, enabling the Government, on behalf of all the parties, to raise the issue of — and seek the continuing

assistance of the United Nations in meeting — the need for further support, for a limited period, in fulfilling the remaining responsibilities of the United Nations and completing the assignment previously agreed.

The peace process in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, not only continues, but keeps moving ahead. While progress is not always as rapid as many observers and participants would prefer, it is nonetheless real and substantial.

While the peace process has some features which are unique to Bougainville and Papua New Guinea as a whole, the way in which it continues, consolidates and progresses is, in certain respects, a model for peace processes in other parts of the world.

The foundations of this peace process lie in the hearts and minds of the people around Bougainville and throughout Papua New Guinea, who are committed to peace. The commitment to practical peace-building by leaders and former combatants on all sides ensures that it keeps gaining strength.

The key to the success achieved to date is the way in which the peace process proceeds on the basis of consultation and cooperation; the same factors may also explain not only the rate at which gains are made but also their solidity.

This success owes a great deal to the support which the peace process has received from UNPOB/UNOMB and to the successive arrangements by which a neutral regional presence has been provided and maintained. The contributors to that neutral regional presence are Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and Vanuatu.

Their cooperation in providing such a presence began when the Truce Monitoring Group arrived in late 1997. It continued when the TMG was replaced by the Peace Monitoring Group (PMG), after the ceasefire agreement was signed on 30 April 1998. Following gradual downsizing, the PMG eventually withdrew on 30 June this year.

The neutral regional presence then took the form of an even more substantially scaled-down presence — the entirely civilian Bougainville transition team, which will withdraw at the end of this month. Like all of its predecessors, the team is unarmed. When it leaves, the peace process will reach another critical milestone on the road to self-sustaining peace.

The Bougainville parties and the national Government will be directly and visibly responsible for maintaining, consolidating and building peace for themselves. Having considered the matter when they met in the Interim Joint Supervisory Body from 21 to 23 October 2003, political leaders in Bougainville and at the national level are agreed that the team's withdrawal can safely proceed.

The Kuri resolution on implementation of autonomy records the Interim Joint Supervisory Body's agreed view. In forming that judgment, leaders have also agreed that it is critical that the United Nations remain on the ground and continue to provide support for a limited time.

It was a sign of the faith that all of the parties have in the United Nations that they originally agreed to give certain critical, very sensitive responsibilities in the peace process to UNPOB/UNOMB. It was a further expression of confidence and trust in the effectiveness of UNPOB/UNOMB that the parties agreed to give this body further responsibilities in relation to weapons disposal.

Those responsibilities are specified in the resolution by which the Peace Process Consultative Committee (PPCC), chaired by the Director of UNPOB/UNOMB, adopted the agreed weapons-disposal plan. They were then incorporated in the Bougainville Peace Agreement. Some of them have now been given force of law, through the amendment to the national Constitution of Papua New Guinea and the organic law implementing the Agreement.

The faith, confidence and trust that the parties have in UNPOB/UNOMB is not only a compliment to this particular body; it is also a strong expression of confidence in the United Nations. Concretely, it also a product of, and a tribute to, the integrity, dedication and effectiveness of the Director, Ambassador Noel Sinclair, and other personnel of UNPOB/UNOMB. It is a mark of the confidence, respect and trust they enjoy on all sides.

The agreed weapons-disposal plan makes UNPOB/UNOMB responsible for supervising and holding one of two keys to each of the containers in which weapons are held at stage II. With the decision on the final fate of the weapons at stage III still to be made and put into effect, this responsibility is an important part of UNPOB/UNOMB's unfinished business — a part of the agreed weapons plan, which

the Government naturally wants to see brought to an end through the destruction of the guns at the earliest practicable opportunity.

In addition, through provisions which are probably unique in the world, the Constitution of Papua New Guinea makes specific reference, at a number of points, to the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville. The provision which specifies this body's role in relation to verification and certification of stage II of the agreed weapons plan is no longer relevant, as the responsibilities arising from it have been fulfilled.

The report verifying and certifying stage II was presented to the Government more than four months ago. The Government acted immediately to bring into full operation the constitutional arrangements providing for the establishment of the autonomous Bougainville Government under a Bougainville Constitution made in accordance with the Constitution of Papua New Guinea, and the holding of a deferred and conditional referendum on Bougainville's political future. The remaining responsibilities which the Papua New Guinea constitution vests in UNPOB/UNOMB have to do with determining the outcome of any disputes between the parties on the question of whether conditions are conducive to the holding of elections for an autonomous Bougainville government, including whether the elections should be deferred and the length of any deferral.

The relevant provision is section 279, subsection 2, of the Papua New Guinea Constitution. That provision was agreed upon at a time when the parties expected the peace process to be concluded much earlier than has proved possible. The date specified in the Bougainville Peace Agreement for UNPOB/UNOMB to complete its assignment and leave was a prediction, not an agreed target, and, unfortunately, it has not been achieved. The reason was not a setback, or deliberate delays. It was, in certain respects, a result of the way in which the peace process was founded and has continued to gather strength, through consultation and co-operation.

Thus, Papua New Guinea's request for continuing United Nations support for the peace process is not so much a matter of seeking an extension as of seeing a previously agreed assignment through. It is concerned with ensuring that an agreed role is completed and that remaining responsibilities are fulfilled. Made at a time when peace and good governance are pressing international concerns, it is a request for assistance in honouring previous agreements to support peace-building and giving effect to provisions contained in Papua New Guinea's democratic Constitution, all of which have been previously agreed.

For the sake of avoiding unnecessary uncertainty, disputes and possible resort to the courts, it would be best if the continuing presence of the United Nations could still be known as the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea — perhaps with a word like "transitional", "interim" or "temporary" added to make clear that it will exist for only a very limited time, until the autonomous Bougainville government is elected — which is expected to be during 2004.

Papua New Guinea's request for United Nations assistance in seeing the role and responsibilities given to UNPOB/UNOMB through is not a matter only of implementing the agreed weapons disposal plan or of meeting formal constitutional requirements. It is also relevant to other concerns.

When the TMG first arrived in 1997, the parties involved in the peace process were aware of the need to consult and cooperate in resolving any difficulties that might arise and in keeping the peace process moving ahead. They therefore agreed to set up a mechanism for that purpose. The Cairns Commitment was signed in late 1997. When the Ceasefire Agreement was signed and UNPOB/UNOMB commenced, the mechanism evolved into the Peace Process Consultative Committee (PPCC), which the head of UNPOB/UNOMB has, by agreement, been invited to chair.

The PPCC is the principal means of ensuring regular contact between all of the parties involved in the peace process. It is the forum in which the national Government and the former combatant groups, in particular, can consult when difficulties arise and cooperate in planning the way ahead.

It is vital that the PPCC continue to operate until a government representative of the people of Bougainville is elected and assumes responsibility for the government of Bougainville under the agreed autonomy arrangements contained in the Bougainville Peace Agreement and implementing laws. As I have already said, that is expected to take place during 2004. As the Kuri resolution on the implementation of autonomy records, leaders on all sides see a need for a

continuing United Nations presence until then. They have also agreed the United Nations should cease operating and should leave as soon as the autonomous Bougainville government has been elected.

The agreement contained in the resolution states,

> "that in view of the important role that UNOMB and its director continue to play, and the confidence and trust they enjoy on all sides, the national Government should seek an extension for UNOMB under the continuing leadership of His Excellency Ambassador Noel Sinclair for a further 12 months, or, if earlier, until the elections for the autonomous Bougainville government have been held and the autonomous Bougainville government is set up".

The meaning is clear: there is still a continuing need for the United Nations to continue, consolidate and complete the remaining responsibilities originally agreed upon for UNPOB/UNOMB. The United Nations presence should remain until the autonomous Bougainville government has been elected. It should then be withdrawn. None of the parties wants to see the peace process become dependent on external support. All of them are committed to honouring the letter and the spirit of existing agreements. They are determined to see that peace-building and peace itself become self-sustaining as soon as the agreed procedures for establishing the autonomous Bougainville government have been followed and elections held.

Agreement to place the Bougainville Peace Agreement within the framework of the Papua New Guinea Constitution is basic to the entire Agreement. It was, in certain respects, quite hard-won, as far as certain Bougainville parties were concerned. It is critical for the National Government and Papua New Guinea as a whole. It is therefore very important that the United Nations maintain a continuing presence in Bougainville until the agreed processes for building peace and getting the autonomous Bougainville government up and running have been achieved.

The respect and trust that the head, Ambassador Noel Sinclair, and the personnel of UNPOB/UNOMB enjoy has a very significant influence on the parties' willingness to compromise. There are many advantages to asking Ambassador Noel Sinclair, in particular, to stay on so that the parties can continue to draw on his experience and influence and so that unnecessary disruption can be avoided. The sensitive way in which the Ambassador has encouraged the parties to come together has facilitated agreement. Recently, he was able to provide encouragement with respect to the resolution in which the main former combatant groups committed themselves to destruction as the ultimate goal of weapons disposal.

The head and staff of UNPOB/UNOMB continue to support and promote further cooperation among all parties. They make a significant, active contribution to efforts to remove existing barriers and bring Francis Ona and his remaining supporters in the "no-go zone" around Panguna into the peace process so that peace can be secured throughout Bougainville.

The attendance by former members of the Me'ekamui Defence Force at recent PPCC meetings, together with their active involvement in the recent meeting of former combatants on Nissan Island to prepare for stage III of weapons disposal, shows that progress is being made. Meanwhile, the national Government and the Bougainville parties continue to consult and cooperate in developing a constitution for the autonomous Bougainville government. The Government has recently acted decisively to resolve issues that might otherwise have impacted negatively on constitution-making in Bougainville.

The Government has also acted decisively to delegate certain police functions and powers to Bougainville in order to prepare the way for strengthening policing there in other ways. It is preparing for progress on the restoration of civil authority more generally, including with regard to courts and correctional services. In fact, the police Commander in Bougainville will be commissioned as an Assistant Commissioner of the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary in the next day or so, with the enhanced delegation of functions and powers that go with his new rank.

The National Executive Council, which is the Cabinet of Papua New Guinea, has already delegated its own functions and powers in relation to policing to the Bougainville Interim Provincial Government, which will exercise them, on the basis of the principles that apply to the police at the national level — with the addition, in this case, of informal consultations with the Bougainville People's Congress.

Bougainville police will be allowed to wear special insignia on their uniforms. The national Government has mobilized funds to help reduce

tensions by settling outstanding financial claims, entitlements and other payments.

In relation to weapons disposal, the conditions that former combatants have placed on the implementation of destruction at stage III — reconciliation, and the implementation of the Bougainville constitution — have no authority under the Bougainville Peace Agreement. The agreement does not provide for delay. The PPCC meeting which is due to be held in Buka this week should agree to destruction and implement the decision with all deliberate speed, so normalcy can return and peace can be secured.

Thus, the peace process in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, continues to advance. The letter that my Government has sent to the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, and the aide-memoire that we have circulated to members of the Security Council, explain our request for UNPOB/UNOMB and Ambassador Noel Sinclair to remain.

We recognize the need for economy and for an exit strategy. We are aware of legitimate pressures for UNPOB/UNOMB to remain lean, focused and effective. We accept that the successor to UNPOB/UNOMB in its present form will therefore probably have to be somewhat scaled down.

Papua New Guinea is grateful for the support that Australia and other countries in our region have expressed for our request. We are confident others will be sympathetic and give their support; I was pleased to hear this morning that many support the continued presence of the United Nations.

Papua New Guinea also appreciates that the various United Nations organs have roles and responsibilities of their own. My Government understands the need to follow proper procedures. It is against the background of our shared understanding with officials and other States Members of the United Nations that Papua New Guinea seeks a continuing United Nations presence in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, for a limited time to see the role and responsibilities given to UNPOB/UNOMB through to an early conclusion. We make that request as part of our commitment to the goal that has guided the peace process from the earliest stages: to secure lasting peace by peaceful means so that peace becomes self-sustaining.

Papua New Guinea commends that request to the Security Council for its most careful consideration and support. In doing so, I take the opportunity to express once again and to emphasize, on behalf of all parties, Papua New Guinea's sincere appreciation for the contributions UNPOB/UNOMB has made, the support that the Secretary-General and the Security Council have provided and the assistance that a number of United Nations specialized agencies continue to provide to the peace process and to practical peace-building in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea.

The President (*spoke in French*): In order to optimize the use of our time, I shall not individually invite speakers to take seats at the Council table. When a speaker is taking the floor, the Conference Officer will seat the next speaker at the Council table.

I now call on the representative of New Zealand.

Mr. MacKay (New Zealand): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Türk for his comprehensive briefing to the Council this morning. New Zealand welcomes the ongoing progress with the peace process on the Papua New Guinea island of Bougainville, and we are grateful to the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB) for its useful role in that effort. I should also say that we very much appreciate the support provided by the Department of Political Affairs and its staff at the New York end.

While it is encouraging that Bougainville factions have met to discuss the final fate of the weapons that have been contained, we would have hoped that an unambiguous decision to immediately destroy the weapons could have been made. We encourage all parties to expedite a final decision to destroy the contained weapons and thus to conclude the disarmament process on the island.

We are mindful that the Government of Papua New Guinea has requested the United Nations to continue to play a constructive role in the peace process. It is of key importance, as the peace process progresses, to ensure that all Bougainvilleans have a say in setting the agenda for the process. Too often in the recent past, the views of former combatants have been given disproportionate weight. An ongoing United Nations political presence should therefore be structured in such a way so as to ensure that the voices of all Bougainvilleans are heard.

The main concern for the vast majority of Bougainvilleans is the improvement of their social and economic conditions. New Zealand, along with Australia and other donors, has made significant investments in the development of the island. We encourage enhanced engagement by United Nations funds and programmes to complement those efforts.

Should the Council approve a continued United Nations political presence, the size of that mission should be reflective of the needs on the ground at present, and Council members will want to weigh carefully the views that have been put to them today on that point.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Australia.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): I ordinarily dispense with courtesies — I am an Australian, after all — but this morning, I want particularly to thank you, Sir, for this meeting and to commend you on your excellent stewardship of the Council this month, and indeed for an outstanding term over the past two years. In addition, I want to thank Danilo Türk for his extremely helpful and practical contribution and to thank his colleagues for the excellent work they do on this issue.

We welcome the opportunity to address the Security Council as it considers this issue. As the Council is aware, we are a strong supporter of the Bougainville peace process. Importantly, our support has included leadership of the four-country regional Peace Monitoring Group and, more recently, the small, civilian Bougainville Transition Team. Both of those bodies have worked closely with the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB), particularly in implementing the agreed weapons disposal plan.

The peace process has now moved well beyond the fragile ceasefire agreement of 1998. We acknowledge recent developments in the peace process, including the in-principle agreement by former combatants to destroy their weapons during an Australian-funded meeting on Nissan Island, agreement on many of the practical challenges facing Bougainville through the Kuri Resolution on Implementation of Autonomy, and the recent delegation of policing powers. We look forward to more progress at this week's meeting of the Peace Process Consultative Committee.

The peace process has now reached a point at which the parties are talking about moving beyond immediate post-conflict issues to the issues involved in restoring democratic good governance. Peace is now becoming self-sustaining. In consultation with our regional partners, and with the support of parties to the peace process, we will therefore withdraw the Bougainville Transition Team at the end of the year. We will remain involved, but our support will now flow more directly through our bilateral cooperation with Papua New Guinea.

Australia notes the final extension of UNPOB's mandate granted by the Security Council last year, and we agree that UNPOB should now be brought to an end. The international community must, however, remain involved. In particular, we note that the United Nations was recently asked by the parties to remain engaged in Bougainville and that it has a clear role under the Bougainville Peace Agreement in verifying and certifying the weapons disposal process.

We endorse Papua New Guinea's requests for a smaller, more focused United Nations presence. Such a presence could support the conclusion of the weapons disposal process; facilitate the finalization of Bougainville's constitution; and encourage planning for early, free and fair elections. It should be transitional in nature and could, in the first instance, be headed by UNPOB's current director, Noel Sinclair.

In the period ahead, Bougainville will face serious challenges — challenges that Australia remains committed to helping the parties overcome. Over the next four years, our development assistance will focus on good governance and on helping the parties to establish a viable and affordable autonomous administration for Bougainville. Our aid will also maintain support for essential services and economic growth. We hope to open that programme to other donors, and we will invite interested States to contribute.

We are particularly aware of the challenge of maintaining law and justice, including an effective and credible police force. On 11 December this year, Australia and Papua New Guinea entered a new era of cooperation, through which Australian police and officials will work side by side with Papua New Guineans to help the Government of Papua New Guinea to address its key challenges. As part of that package of enhanced cooperation, Australia has offered

to send a police team of up to 20 personnel to Bougainville. They are available to start work on Bougainville within weeks. Those personnel will work alongside members of the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary to help to restore confidence in the police force on Bougainville, to enhance its policing capacity and to assist with the future training and development of new recruits. We will also provide some basic policing equipment, and we will work closely with New Zealand to strengthen other key components of the law and justice sector, including improved police training, courts, correctional services and community policing.

Australia urges all parties to remain seized of the serious challenges facing Bougainville and to move swiftly to conclude the peace process and to prepare for free and fair elections. Australia remains committed to providing the parties with continued support. We hope that the international community, and in particular the United Nations, will also stand ready to assist in those endeavours.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Australia for the kind words addressed to me.

I now call on the representative of Japan.

Mr. Haraguchi (Japan): At the outset, I should like to say that the Japanese Government welcomes the continued and steady progress in the peace process in Bougainville since the previous open meeting on this matter, held in August of this year. We are pleased that the implementation of the 2001 peace agreement is in its final stage. Stage III, in which the final disposition of the collected weapons is to be decided, is in progress. It is the wish of the international community that once security has been restored through completion of the weapons disposal plan, the first elections for an autonomous government in Bougainville, as provided in the Bougainville Peace Agreement, be held promptly, so that the people of Bougainville will be able to live in peace and start the restoration and development process through their own volition.

My Government appreciates the steady execution by the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB) of its mandate, including the collection of weapons, since its establishment in 1998. Now that the peace process is in its final stage, it is crucial that the peace that has been attained in Bougainville, after the end of the long-term conflict that lasted a decade, be definitively and irreversibly consolidated. In order for UNPOB to complete the work that is yet to be done, we support the extension of its mandate, to the extent necessary.

At the same time, however, I must add that Japan, as a Member State which is obliged to share as much as 19.6 per cent of the United Nations budget, is gravely concerned about the continuing expansion of the United Nations budget. Therefore, we request that after its mandate is extended, UNPOB provide evaluation reports at an appropriate time, so that countries concerned, including Japan, will be able to verify the effectiveness of its activities. In addition, we believe that closer coordination and cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other relevant organs of the United Nations system that are conducting activities in the field, would be conducive to an early completion of UNPOB's mandate. In that context, my delegation would like to welcome some suggestions made earlier in this forum on the downsizing of UNPOB's structure and the sharing of office space between UNPOB and UNDP.

Support for the consolidation of peace in the aftermath of a conflict is one of the pillars of Japan's foreign policy. In this context, I would like to mention that, at the Third Japan-Pacific Islands Forum Summit Meeting, hosted by my Government in May of this year, Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi, Prime Minister Somare of Papua New Guinea and other Pacific Islands Forum leaders identified enhanced security in the Pacific region as one of the priority policy objectives that must be addressed jointly by Japan and Forum members. As one concrete effort in pursuit of that objective, my Government began this October to provide assistance for improvement in such areas as education, public health and transportation infrastructure, with a view to ensuring stability in the daily lives of the people of Bougainville and strengthening their economy.

It is the intention of my Government to continue to pay close attention to developments in the peace process in Bougainville.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Türk to respond to questions posed and comments made by the delegations.

Mr. Türk: There were no specific questions that I need to answer at this point, but I would like to say

how much we in the Secretariat appreciate the positive comments that were heard in this discussion. We shall not fail to convey to Mr. Noel Sinclair the words of appreciation which Security Council members and others have expressed. We are gratified that the Security Council appreciates the sensitivity of the current situation with regard to strengthening peace in Bougainville.

We are equally encouraged by the support that we have heard for the proposal of the Secretary-General regarding the follow-up to the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB), and I would like to again stress that this will be a very small mission and one which will continue to be an example of the effectiveness of United Nations work.

We have heard various comments made in that regard, including the comment by the Ambassador of New Zealand, who emphasized that the ongoing United Nations political presence should be structured to ensure that the voices of all Bougainvilleans are heard. That is indeed a very important principle.

Finally, we are strongly encouraged by the understanding expressed in the discussion for the need to pursue the finalization of three principle objectives in Bougainville — autonomy and elections, weapons destruction, and development and commitments which were made to the development of Bougainville and to the assistance necessary in the future. All of that bodes well for the future of United Nations work in that area and we hope that work will be successful.

The President *(spoke in French)*: I thank Mr. Tuck for his clarifications. There are no other speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.